This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method for inspecting a sample with a probe beam, said probe beam being focused to a spot onto the sample surface, said spot having a generally elliptical shape with a long and a short axis, with the properties of the probe beam being measured after reflection from the sample, the method comprising:

determining a proximity of an inspection spot on the sample surface to an edge of the sample; and

positioning the sample with respect to the probe beam such that when the inspection spot is determined to be close to the edge of the sample, the probe beam spot falls on the inspection spot with the short axis being substantially perpendicular to the sample edge, the positioning of the sample including rotating the sample with respect to the probe beam in order to minimize an area of the sample which cannot be accurately inspected.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

determining a proximity of a subsequent inspection spot on the sample surface to an edge of the sample; and

repositioning the sample with respect to the probe beam such that when the subsequent inspection spot is determined to be close to the edge of the sample, the probe beam spot falls on the subsequent inspection spot with the short axis being substantially perpendicular to the sample edge, the positioning of the sample including rotating the sample with respect to the probe beam.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

positioning the sample with respect to the probe beam such that when the inspection spot is not close to the edge of the sample, the positioning of the sample including translating the sample without rotation.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein:

positioning the sample further includes translating the sample with respect to the probe beam.

Claims 5-7. (Cancelled).